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KELLY SERVICES The "Kelly Girl" People

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The Secretary's Role in the Electronic Office:

A Survey of Kelly Services'

Temporary Office/Clerical Employees

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April 1982

INTRODUCTION

This report contains the results of a mail survey conducted by Research & Forecasts, Inc. for Kelly Services, Inc. The survey was designed to measure secretaries' attitudes towards and opinions of technological advances and needs of the office in the 1980's.

The population of our sample consists of 2500 temporary office / clerical employees in twenty (20) major Kelly markets. In all, 527 questionnaires were received. This represents a response rate of 21%, a good return for this group. As a result, the report can be considered indicative of the opinions of the group as a whole. Percentages on each question may not represent the total (527) respondents, but only those who chose to answer the particular question.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Almost 9 out of 10 (87%) secretaries rank word processors "extremely important" office equipment in the 1980's. Clear majorities say the same about electronic and electric typewriters (75% and 64%) and intelligent copiers (70%), while only 33% give the rating to electronic mail.

- Ninety-nine percent (99%) of respondents say that on-the-job training will be significant in the 1980's business office. Eighty-seven percent (87%) rank it "extremely important," while 12% feel it will be "somewhat important." Seventy-five percent (75%) give individual benefit packages top rating and 54% feel this way about financial incentives. Although 82% believe company-based day-care centers will be important, only 41% say they will be "extremely important."

- While 46% say that a business school background will be helpful, only 10% feel the same about a college degree.

- Seventy-four percent (74%) believe word processing training will be required for secretaries in the 1980's. In addition, about half of Kelly employees feel that secretaries will "definitely need" basic computer courses (50%) and data processing (47%).

- In a releated question, 87% of secretaries rate word processing skills and/or typing skills as "extremely important." Only 27% rated shorthand as high.

- Despite the importance secretaries place on word processing training and skills, only 29% know how to use the equipment. An additional 8% are currently being trained.

- Secretaries on the West Coast are especially likely to have word processing skills. Thirty-nine percent (39%) are trained to use word processing equipment vs. about 26% of secretaries in other regions.

- Most secretaries (64%) are not at all worried about changing technology and its effect on the business office. Only 6% are "very worried."

- Of those who are worried, 34% are uncertain where to learn new skills and 36% fear being displaced by machines.

- The role of secretary will become more important in the 1980's according to 62% of respondents. Secretaries under the age of 50 are especially likely to feel this way.

- Flexible working arrangements will play a significant role in the 1980's business office, in the opinion of 64% of respondents who said flex time will be "extremely important." Fifty-eight percent (58%) named temporary employment and approximately half job sharing (48%) and part-time work (45%).

- Older workers are especially favorable toward adaptable work patterns. Of the 50 and older age group, 73% believe temporary work will be "extremely important," while 59% give the same rating to part-time work.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Kelly Services' secretaries demonstrate a high level of awareness of the changes technology will bring to the 1980's business office. Clear majorities feel that word processors, electronic and electric typewriters, intelligent copiers and desk computers will be "extremely important" in the years to come.

TABLE ONE:

In your opinion, how important will the following be in business offices in the 1980's?

Equipment	Extremely Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Very Important %	Number of Respondents
Electronic Mail	33	50	17	(422)
Desk Computers	58	35	7	(486)
Tele-Conferencing	41	48	11	(450)
Word Processors	87	12	1	(508)
Dictating Machines	42	46	12	(496)
Electronic Typewriters	75	22	3	(465)
Intelligent Copiers	70	27	3	(463)
Electric Typewriters	64	28	8	(511)

Furthermore, almost all of the respondents feel that on-the-job training to use the new technology will be extremely important; more choose this as an extremely important benefit than any other listed.

TABLE TWO:

In your opinion, how important will the following benefits be in business offices in the 1980's?

	Extremely Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Very Important %	Number of Respondent
Benefits				
Individual Benefit Packages	75	21	4	(482)
On-The Job Training To Use New Technologies	87	12	1	(522)
Special Financial Incentives	54	41	5	(495)
Company-Based Day Care Centers	41	41	18	(489)
Company Arranged Transportation	27	39	34	(500)
Relocation Services	34	45	21	(479)
Company Based Health & Fitness Facilities	36	38	26	(499)

Nearly three quarters (74%) of the respondents believe that secretaries will definitely need word processing skills in the next five to ten years. About half cite basic computer courses (50%), data processing (47%) and a general business school background (46%). Only one in ten (10%) thinks that secretaries will definitely need a college degree, and 11% feel that a degree is definitely not needed.

TABLE THREE:

In your opinion, what specific training or background will secretaries need in the next five to ten years?

Training or Background	Definitely Needed %	Probably Needed %	Probably Not Needed %	Definitely Not Needed %	Number of Respondents
General Business School Background	46	40	12	2	(502)
Basic Computer Courses	50	41	8	1	(511)
College Degree	10	35	44	11	(495)
Special Training for Administrative Tasks	42	45	12	1	(508)
Data Processing	47	44	8	1	(500)
Time Management Training	33	47	18	2	(494)
Word Processing	74	24	2	--	(514)

Similarly, when asked to rate the importance of various office skills, almost nine out of ten secretaries (89%) feel that word processing and typing are both extremely important skills for the 1980's office worker. However, a later question indicates that only 29% are trained to use word processing equipment. Another 8% are currently being trained, but 63% have no word processing training.

TABLE FOUR:

In your opinion, how important will the following skill be in business offices in the 1980's?

Skills	Extremely Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Very Important %	Number of Respondents
Typing	89	10	1	(516)
Shorthand	27	39	34	(493)
Filing	45	42	13	(510)
Data Processing	81	17	2	(499)
Dictaphone Transcription	49	43	8	(504)
Word Processing	89	9	2	(510)

TABLE FIVE:

Have you been trained on word processing equipment?

	%
Yes	29
No	63
Being Trained	8
(Number of Respondents)	(510)

More secretaries on the West Coast (39%) say they have been trained on word processing equipment. This compares to 31% of secretaries in the North Central Region and about a quarter of secretaries in other regions.

TABLE SIX:

Word Processing Training & Region

	Northeast %	North Central %	South %	West %
Yes	21	31	29	39
No	67	64	64	57
Being Trained	12	5	7	4
(Number of Respondents)	(172)	(118)	(119)	(92)

Despite their awareness of the new technologies, and the fact that a small percentage are trained to use word processing equipment, more than two thirds (64%) of respondents, are not at all worried about the new technology. Only 6% say they are very worried.

TABLE SEVEN:

How worried are you about the "electronic invasion" of the office?

	%
Very worried	6
Somewhat Worried	30
Not Worried at All	64
(Number of Respondents)	(498)

Secretaries with a college background are less worried than those with only a high school education or business college experience. Forty-two percent (42%) of the high school graduates and half of those with a business school background are at least somewhat worried about changing technology. This compares with only 30% of those with a college background, and 24% of those with a graduate education.

TABLE EIGHT:

Worry over changing technology by education.

	High School Graduate	Some Business School	Business School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate	Post Graduate
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very Worried	11	6	4	5	3	7
	42	50	53	30	31	24
Somewhat Worried	31	44	49	25	28	17
Not Worried at all	58	50	47	70	79	76
(Number of Respondents)	(90)	(48)	(57)	(131)	(112)	(54)

Of those who express some concern about technology's impact on the office, most are concerned about very practical issues. Thirty-six percent (36%) fear displacement by machines, and 34% are uncertain where to learn new skills. Only 13% express doubts about their ability to learn new skills and only 1% give as their reason "nervousness about assuming greater responsibility."

TABLE NINE:

If you are somewhat or very worried, what is the single, most important reason why you are worried about technological changes in the office?

	%
Fear of being displaced by machines	36
Uncertainty about ability to learn new skills	13
Uncertainty where to learn new skills	34
Anticipation of major change in your relationship to your supervisor	3
Nervousness about assuming greater responsibility	1
Difficulty for temporary help to get training	2
Time and money involved in learning new skills	4
Health concerns	1
Other	6
(Number of Respondents)	(184)

Sixty-two (62%) are confident that the secretary's role will grow in importance in the next few years. Sixty-four percent (64%) of those less than 50 years of age believe the secretary's role will be enhanced, while only half of those 50 years of age or over feel this way.

TABLE TEN:

In your opinion, will the role of the secretary grow more or less important or stay the same in the 1980's?

	%
More	62
Less	8
Stay the Same	30
(Number of Respondents)	(511)

TABLE ELEVEN:

Role of secretary in the 1980's, and age.

	12-24	25-34	35-49	50 and Older
More Important	68	62	66	50
Less Important	11	7	6	8
Stay the Same	21	31	28	12
(Number of Respondents)	(89)	(197)	(142)	(80)

In the area of work arrangements, a majority feel that flex time (64%) and temporary work (58%) will be extremely important to workers in the 1980's. About half give that ranking to part-time work (46%) and job sharing (48%).

TABLE TWELVE:

In your opinion, how important will the following be in business offices in the 1980's?

	Extremely Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Very Important %	(Number of Respondents)
Work Arrangements				
Temporary Work	58	36	6	(509)
Part Time	46	45	9	(502)
Flex Time	64	27	9	(486)
Job Sharing	48	38	14	(477)

Nearly three quarters (73%) of those over the age of 50 say that temporary work will be extremely important in the 1980's vs. over half (55%) of the younger group. Married or formerly married secretaries are more likely than singles (63% vs. 51%) to feel this way.

TABLE THIRTEEN:

Perceptions on importance of temporary work and age

	18-24 %	25-34 %	35-49 %	50 and Older %
Extremely Important	54	54	57	73
Somewhat Important	39	39	38	26
Not Very Important	7	7	6	1
(Number of Respondents)	(89)	(194)	(141)	(76)

TABLE FOURTEEN:

Perceptions on importance of temporary work and marital status

	Single %	Married %	Divorced/ Separated %	Widowed %
Extremely Important	51	60	68	64
Somewhat Important	42	34	29	36
Not Very Important	7	6	3	0
(Number of Respondents)	(91)	(219)	(68)	(14)

College Graduates are slightly more likely than those of other educational levels to perceive part-time work as extremely important. Older secretaries are more likely than younger secretaries to feel that part-time work is extremely important. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of secretaries 50 years of age or over feel that part-time work is extremely important vs. 44% of those under the age of 50.

TABLE FIFTEEN:

Perceptions on importance of part-time work and education.

	High School Graduate	Some Business School	Business School Graduate	Some College	College Graduate	Post Graduate
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely Important	48	39	46	41	53	46
Somewhat Important	45	39	48	48	42	48
Not Very Important	7	22	6	11	5	6
(Number of Respondents)	(98)	(46)	(54)	(132)	(110)	(54)

TABLE SIXTEEN:

Perceptions on impact of part-time work and age.

	18-24	25-34	35-49	50 and Older
	%	%	%	%
Important	41	42	48	59
Somewhat Important	49	49	42	35
Not Very Important	10	9	10	6
(Number of Respondents)	(90)	(189)	(139)	(75)

Business school graduates are less likely than those of other educational levels to say that job sharing is extremely important. Divorced, separated, or widowed secretaries are slightly more likely than those who are married or single to feel that job sharing is extremely important.

TABLE SEVENTEEN:

Perceptions on importance of job sharing and education.

	High School Graduate %	Some Business School %	Business School Graduate %	Some College %	College Graduate %	Post Graduate %
Extremely Important	46	53	29	52	49	54
Somewhat Important	34	36	61	34	35	37
Not Very Important	20	11	10	14	16	9
(Number of Respondents)	(91)	(45)	(51)	(126)	(106)	(52)

TABLE EIGHTEEN:

Perceptions on job sharing and marital status.

	Single %	Married %	Divorced / Separated %	Widowed %
Extremely Important	43	49	57	54
Somewhat Important	39	40	32	23
Not Very Important	18	11	11	23
(Number of Respondents)	(179)	(206)	(63)	(13)